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Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4785th meeting

Wednesday, 9 July 2003, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Arias	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Antonio
	Bulgaria	Mr. Raytchev
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Ms. Iwersen
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Olson

Agenda

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to West Africa from 26 June to 5 July 2003 (S/2003/688).

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03-42179 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to West Africa from 26 June to 5 July 2003 (S/2003/688)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Sir Jeremy Greenstock, head of the Security Council mission to West Africa.

It is so decided.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, head of mission in Guinea-Bissau and Chairman of the Security Council sanctions Committee on Sierra Leone.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them photocopies of the report of the Security Council mission to West Africa. This report will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2003/688 on Friday, 11 July 2003.

I now call on Sir Jeremy Greenstock, head of the Security Council mission to West Africa.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: It was a great privilege to lead the Security Council mission to West Africa. All 15 members of the Council came. I think we had an extremely interesting experience. All members of the mission contributed to that experience.

We worked on five principal themes: the specific issues of Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia; and we also had a very close look at the progress of the post-conflict situation in Sierra Leone. But throughout the trip we were following a fifth theme: the condition of West Africa as a whole and the need for the international community and the whole family of United Nations institutions, funds, agencies and programmes to generate a new momentum of support, assistance and partnership with West Africa to begin now to bring it up from the lowest levels of the human development list.

We are issuing today a detailed report on our visit, with a number of recommendations across these five themes. I hope that this report and its recommendations will be taken very seriously by the Security Council, by the United Nations as a whole and by the international community, because there are recommendations that have implications that go beyond the United Nations family itself. The report is in its final stages of preparation. There are one or two editorial changes to be made, so the version we have in document S/2003/688 is virtually the final report but for a few letters to be changed. Members can certainly work on that basis.

Members will recall that the timing of the mission changed from late May to the end of June. That postponement was discussed at the time and we knew the reasons for it. I regret that it was necessary, but I do not think — and I do not think any other members of the mission felt – that the changed timing had an effect on what we were able to achieve. On the contrary, I think that, in coinciding with the beginnings of the climax of the Liberia story and with developments, especially, in Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire, we were able to have an effect on the revised timing that may have been a bit greater than the effect we would have had on the late-May timing.

Not least, we have come back to New York as the President of the United States is paying an historic visit to Africa. The momentum generated by what we did and what we are reporting — and especially by the significance of that American presidential visit — I hope will combine, as the African Union summit also takes place in Maputo, to deliver a new stage of effective action on African development which will pay dividends in the months and years to come.

On Guinea-Bissau, I have pleasure in passing that particular buck to my friend and colleague, Ambassador Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, whose constructive support and whose firm, clear messages in the meetings we had in West Africa were a considerable asset to the

mission. We will wait and hear his report on our conclusions on Guinea-Bissau.

On Côte d'Ivoire, we delivered an unmistakable message that the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement has got to be the basis of the next stage of national conciliation and new impetus for development in that country. Both the Government and the Forces nouvelles, I think, understood that we had that simple, forceful message and it was delivered by a united mission in all our meetings with the players in Côte d'Ivoire.

We arrived at a time of some disturbance, particularly in Abidjan. The Forces nouvelles had issued a communiqué the day before the mission arrived calling off their participation in disarmament and recalling Forces nouvelles ministers to base, but they did not carry out those threats. They met with us and they continued their discussions with representatives of the Government. Their ministers stayed in Abidjan and met the mission, as did their military leaders.

Since our visit, President Gbagbo has speeded up the steps to pass the amnesty law. It went through the Cabinet on 4 July, and we hope it will go through the Assembly this week.

We succeeded in encouraging closer dialogue between the Forces armées nationals de Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the Forces nouvelles. Military leaders of FANCI and the Forces nouvelles continued their dialogue after they met the mission together on 1 July. It is very welcome news that FANCI and the Forces nouvelles have issued a declaration of a permanent end to hostilities and a pledge to implement the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. All members of the Council will have noted the significant event in Abidjan over the weekend, where the President led a gathering that gave further impetus to the implementation of that Agreement.

As for Liberia, the mission was careful not to get involved in any of the details of the negotiations led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We consulted closely with ECOWAS leaders in Abuja and in Accra before we met with all the Liberian parties and with members of civil society in two visits to Accra. In those meetings, we put across very strongly to the parties that they must all respect the ceasefire, negotiate in good faith, respect the rights of the Liberian people and, for once, put the condition of the Liberian people ahead of any factional priority. There are questions here — of human rights, humanitarian law, humanitarian access, refugees and displaced persons, women and children and of the recruitment of child soldiers — that we asked every party to address with urgency, because the condition of Liberian civilians is one of the worst in any conflict situation in the world today.

We hope that those messages will have had some impact. The talks between the parties resumed in Accra on 7 July, and they are continuing at a level lower than head of delegation because some senior people have been called to Maputo to talk to African heads of State or Government at the African Union summit. But there is movement there. General Abubakar himself, the facilitator, has gone to Maputo. He and the Ghanaian Foreign Minister, Mr. Akufo-Addo, were certainly very appreciative of the work we did to encourage momentum between the parties and support for General Abubakar's facilitation.

I think we were particularly struck by the unity and fervour of the call from civil society groups and political parties present in Accra for international involvement in Liberia. I also think that all members of the mission came away hoping that the United Nations system and interested Member States, not least ECOWAS, can respond rapidly to that call. We hope that that will include help to any ECOWAS force that is now decided upon by West African leaders, and we hope that there will be broader international support as well. But, clearly, ceasefire implementation and the basics of a peace agreement between the parties are going to be necessary prerequisites for successful deployment of an international force. We hope that progress is made swiftly in those areas.

Of course, we were frequently questioned about President Taylor himself, after the indictment by the Special Court. The mission made clear its basic approach in that respect: that we supported the Court and that we unequivocally supported the principle of no impunity for those indicted for gross abuses of human rights law and humanitarian law. We also made that clear when we visited the Special Court in Sierra Leone. President Obasanjo told us of his intention to offer to receive President Taylor in Nigeria, but we made it clear that it was not for the mission — and probably not for the Security Council — to get involved in specific political decisions in the region.

When we went to Sierra Leone, we congratulated President Kabbah and members of his Government on the progress that had been made since we last visited as a mission, in October 2000. But we all noted, and we were so briefed by the excellent United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) team under the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Adeniji, that there was a long way to go in Sierra Leone before there could be self-sustained stability, peace and a basis for new development in that country. There is work to do in the areas of diamonds and the training and deployment of new police and military forces. The Council will need to take careful decisions on the drawdown of UNAMSIL and calibrate that with the progress being made by the Sierra Leoneans themselves on developing their own institutions and making their own progress.

With regard to the West African region as a whole, which I hope will receive sustained attention from the Council and from other parts of the United Nations as a result of our mission and our report, the subregional problems are huge, and we have listed them in our report. We saw considerable resolve among Governments and in ECOWAS to tackle those problems. But their ability to do so is undoubtedly constrained by the shortage of resources. In the view of the mission, the international community has to do better at helping them. We cannot ask West Africa to take the lead in sorting out its own problems and then expect them to pay for it all. For instance, if there were a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Côte d'Ivoire, as opposed to the efforts being made by Ivorians themselves, we would all be paying for it. No one is obliged to pay for the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI) but if there are no voluntary contributions made to it, it will run out of funding by the end of September. Similar difficulties could affect any ECOWAS force in Liberia.

Likewise, if we want ECOWAS to develop its capacity and become a more effective institution for dealing with subregional problems — many of which, such as the problems of disarmament, mercenaries and small arms and light weapons, require primary leadership from the subregion even if it has United Nations backup — we need to give them more support: funding for the ECOWAS secretariat, better liaison and coordination with the United Nations offices, particularly the Office of the Special Representative for West Africa, closer links with the Security Council and regular information exchanges. The mission has suggested that Special Representative Ould-Abdallah should do a study to identify precisely what support is needed in those areas.

We believe that United Nations coordination in the region is steadily improving. We made a good start when the Secretary-General appointed a Deputy Special Representative in Sierra Leone, Alan Doss, to combine the role of Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Governance and Stabilization and Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme. But that lesson needs to be spread more widely, and communication between United Nations missions and the West Africa Office needs to be improved to produce a coherent approach to subregional problems. Our report brings out a number of recommendations in that respect, and I hope that they will be followed up.

Finally, since this was my seventh and last mission, a word about Security Council missions. On this mission, we were again very pleased to be working closely with the Economic and Social Council with respect to our leg in Guinea-Bissau. It was right and good to have angles of that Council properly integrated with the message of our Council's mission, highlighting the link that exists between security and development — a link which both Councils need to work on further.

I believe that our missions have a real impact. I was particularly pleased that, in June, the two missions to Africa — to the Great Lakes region and to West Africa — were led by France and by the United Kingdom. I believe that our cooperation is right and good for Africa. Ambassador De La Sablière and I are very pleased that, in a week's time, our Foreign Ministers will be visiting the Great Lakes region jointly and will be taking forward Anglo-French cooperation on the continent.

I believe that our meetings with African Presidents are appreciated and have an effect. We need to be careful about numbers on these missions; the Council has heard me speak to this theme. I think it is excellent when the whole Council is represented, but sometimes we need to break down into smaller numbers so that we can engage in genuine confidential negotiation with very senior people and deliver frank and direct messages. I hope that the Council will always retain flexibility in that respect, and

understanding for those members who are not always included in certain meetings.

On this mission, all its members played their part in making it a success, and I would like to thank them all. It was hard work; I was unrelenting in that respect. But I think that our serious dedication to the objectives of the mission — and to the development of West Africa — came through, and I think that that was the primary success of the mission. My warm thanks go also to the Secretariat. In addition, we express our thanks for all the support that we had on this mission from the United Nations family and from Governments and our own embassies on the ground. It was a huge team effort. It went almost without a hitch, and I apologize again to the representative of Bulgaria for that hitch.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Greenstock for his statement. On behalf of the Council, I sincerely wish to express gratitude and appreciation to all of the members of the mission, led with great effectiveness by Ambassador Greenstock, for the manner in which they carried out their important function on the Council's behalf.

I now give the floor to Mr. Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, head of mission in Guinea-Bissau and Chairman of the Security Council sanctions committee concerning Sierra Leone.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time I have taken the floor since Spain assumed the presidency of the Security Council, I want to congratulate you, Sir, on the way in which you have organized the work of the Council this month. I should also like to thank the delegation of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Sergio Lavrov on the way in which he led the work of the Council, even in the absence of many of its members, who were travelling for much of the time during the Russian Federation's presidency. I also want to thank Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock and the other members of the mission to West Africa for the confidence and the support given to the delegation of Mexico so that we could lead the work of the Security Council on the mission to Guinea-Bissau.

The mission to Guinea-Bissau had a distinctive characteristic: it was a joint or concomitant mission between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, particularly the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau. That provided us, as members of the Security Council and representatives of the Economic and Social Council, the opportunity to observe from a common perspective the very distressing problems and circumstances that Guinea-Bissau is experiencing, to exchange points of view and to strengthen our mechanisms of cooperation, coordination and complementarity. In the case of Guinea-Bissau, that built up a true strategic partnership between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

This was also a first opportunity to work together on the ground for both bodies, each with its own perspective and mandate. In doing so, we found a very broad horizon for complementary work between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, particularly in dealing with problems in the areas of economic development, security and peace in Africa.

We found a country in the midst of a grave social crisis with distressing indices, which tell of a setback that affects the majority of Guinea-Bissau's population with regard to the provision of basic services and access to minimal conditions of life with dignity. We encountered that distressing socio-economic reality as a human factor, but also as a security factor. The security of the country and of the region will depend on the ability to resolve the population's socio-economic problems and on the international cooperation that materializes for that task.

But that is closely linked to the fact that there is also a critical political situation. There is a process of post-conflict political reconstruction in Guinea-Bissau that is moving forward in a fragile and even uncertain way. That requires that there be a clear commitment from the country's authorities and clear support from the international community with regard to the political process. That must, in an initial stage, lead to the election of parliamentary legislative representatives who will make possible the reconfiguration of political arrangements and the full re-establishment of the rule of law.

We also found that, owing to the combination of socio-economic problems and political factors, there are risks of instability and violence that could be imminent if they are not addressed adequately. Those risks could lead to the breakdown of institutions.

We found armed forces that have demonstrated and reaffirmed their commitment to the democratic process and their respect for institutions and

constitutional order, but also armed forces in conditions of extreme indigence, which makes the situation volatile. It is an army that is poorly supplied and badly equipped and even lacks regular payment of salaries, all of which contributes to a situation of uncertainty.

We believe that conditions for peace and security are closely linked to the political process and to economic and social development, and that they represent a reality that is part of a larger regional context. What happens in Guinea-Bissau have will have a major impact on the already uncertain and fragile conditions for peace in the region of West Africa. Events in West Africa will have to be very seriously borne in mind in order to assess the future of stability in Guinea-Bissau.

The complementary visions of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council have made clear the decisive role that is played by international cooperation in development. We are convinced that it is necessary to strengthen the partnership between Guinea-Bissau and the international community on the basis of the criteria established by the Economic and Social Council Working Group, which implies an active commitment on the part of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and donor countries.

However, we are aware that this active commitment cannot lead to an improvement in conditions in, or to a greater flow of resources for, Guinea-Bissau if there are no clear signs or unambiguous signals on the part of the authorities and of society as a whole that they are moving towards strengthening political processes, freedoms and the rule of law. We reached that conclusion and conducted our assessment after the mission had spoken with the country's authorities, including its armed forces. We spoke with United Nations personnel, and we met there a very solid team with a clear vision of what is happening in Guinea-Bissau, under the leadership of the very capable, competent, cautious and clear-sighted leadership of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. David Stephen, who enjoys great prestige and credibility vis-à-vis all sectors of society and the authorities.

We spoke also with all of the political parties, and we took note of the deep divisions that exist within those political organizations, which were urged to work jointly so that the political electoral process could be carried out in the best possible conditions. Of course, we worked also with civil society.

Indeed, we saw a society eager to overcome its setbacks and to organize itself politically — a society that is ready and willing to use its freedoms and to build, through them, understanding and harmony, so that power struggles can be resolved through political means, using democratic channels and within a constitutional framework.

Thus the mission aimed first of all to ensure that dialogue with the authorities would be very clear with respect to the fact that the political process must move forward and that elections must take place in the near future. When we arrived in Guinea-Bissau, no date had been set for the holding of the elections — something that we pointed out and stressed to the authorities, hoping that before our departure we would be able to obtain a commitment as to the holding of elections. We emphasized also the need to ensure the participatory nature of the political process in conditions of freedom, providing full opportunities to all of the political forces of the country in the exercise of their rights and freedoms. We are awaiting a credible political process that would be the starting point for a new political settlement in that country.

Secondly, we stressed the need to give full validity to the legal order, primarily with respect to the fundamental rights of persons and human rights, civil rights and freedom of expression, but also with respect to the rule of law in the context of the functioning of institutions. We stress the fact that specific commitments must be made with respect to restoring the legitimacy of the judiciary and to the proper promulgation of the Constitution.

We believe that, within the framework of the concerns expressed by the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, there is a concomitant factor: clear commitments must be made by the international community and by donor countries in order effectively to accompany the process, especially the political process, providing technical capabilities — through the United Nations — and resources — through the donor countries — in order for the electoral process to proceed.

These are the messages, the commitments and the perspectives of which we spoke. The outcome of the mission was encouraging, but we did leave with a few concerns and some doubts. First, in our dialogue with

the authorities, we were able to ensure that they would make a commitment to the citizenry and to the political forces that the elections would be held — as President Kumba Yalá had anticipated — in October, but now we had a specific date. It was announced shortly after our departure that the authorities were prepared to hold the elections on 12 October.

There were also clear signs on the part of the authorities that they would fully respect the outcome of the election process, whatever it may be, and that they would work under the conditions and the political settlements stemming from that electoral outcome.

We were also assured by the authorities that they would respect the commitment that, once the Assembly is constituted, they would work with it to promulgate the Constitution in the terms decided on by popular representation, and to resolve the question of the composition of the Supreme Court of Justice and the question of its authorities, the President and the Vice-President.

As I said earlier, Guinea-Bissau is at a crossroads. If there is to be reconciliation and a political understanding to respect the rights and freedoms to which all citizens aspire, that country will have to embark on the path towards stability and peace, and, from there, towards economic and social development — the only way to achieve harmony and understanding.

But if this does not happen in the next few months, the risk is political confrontation, a breakdown of order, institutional destabilization and, regrettably, violence, with repercussions for the entire region.

The international community therefore must make its presence felt and comply with its commitment to cooperate in the months preceding the electoral process. This will be vital in order to avert a catastrophe. As our report states, the Security Council and the action of the United Nations and of the Economic and Social Council will play a decisive role in averting the conflict that could erupt if we do not take the proper measures.

The Council must be vigilant. It cannot lose sight of the situation or remain passive in the coming weeks and months. Hence the mission recommended that, from now until the elections, and on the basis of an upcoming report of the Secretary-General, the Council and the Secretariat remain in ongoing communication in order to be present and to support the society and the authorities of Guinea-Bissau in the upcoming political process.

I would like to conclude by stressing once again the urgent call being made by the Security Council mission in its report for donor countries to support these processes.

Allow me to conclude by thanking all members of the mission, the Secretariat and, in particular, the United Kingdom Mission and Vanessa Howe-Jones and Ambassador Greenstock for the support that they gave us so that we could carry out the mission entrusted to us in Guinea-Bissau. Without the support of Ambassador Greenstock and without the planning and the preparatory work for the mission's meetings, we would not have been able to fulfil our mandate with success. I also express my thanks for the cooperation, the spirit of participation and the statements, proposals and advice given by the members of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council who took part in this mission, led by Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Aguilar Zinser for the kind words he addressed to me. On behalf of the Council, I wish to express to him our gratitude, first, for his willingness to head the mission and, secondly, for his effective leadership of it.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.